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## ON THE FORMER OCCURRENCE OF THE WILD BOAR IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

BY THE EDITOR.

IN the chapter on the Wild Boar in my work on 'Extinct British Animals' (1880), I have referred to some of the legends which exist in different parts of the country concerning famous Wild Boars which infested certain districts, and which, after doing a great deal of damage to crops, and sometimes to huntsmen and hounds, were at length killed by the prowess of some individual whose name in consequence has been immortalized in the district. One of the most celebrated stories of the kind (*op. cit.*, p. 80) relates to a Boar which was killed in the Forest of Bernwood, near Brill, where Edward the Confessor had a royal palace, to which he often resorted to enjoy the chase.

In the same county (Buckinghamshire), as appears by some privately-printed researches of Mr. Stephen Tucker, Somerset Herald in Ordinary, an enormous Boar at one time devastated the Manor of Chetwode. The ultimate destruction of this animal gave rise to the institution of a singular toll, known as the Rhyne (Common) Toll, which extended to nine townships, and was an annual tax upon cattle passing through upon the drift between October 29th and November 7th.

A very interesting account of this is given by Mr. Tucker in his 'Pedigree of the Family of Chetwode.'\* As only fifty copies,

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\* Pedigree of the Family of Chetwode of Chetwode, Co. Bucks, &c. With their charters and other evidences. To which is added a Report and Papers

however, of this Pedigree have been printed for private distribution, I have obtained Mr. Tucker's permission to make the facts relating to the Wild Boar and the Rhyne Toll more generally known to naturalists and others by reprinting his remarks thereon in 'The Zoologist.'

He says :—"Many ancient rights and customs, which have long since lost much of their significance, and perhaps now appear to modern notions ridiculous, are nevertheless valuable in connection with history. They often confirm and illustrate facts, which, from the altered state of the country, would otherwise be unintelligible, and perhaps at the present day discredited. Such a custom or privilege is still possessed, and was till recently exercised by the lords of the manor of Chetwode, in Bucks; which, although very curious both in its origin and observance, has escaped the notice of Blount and other writers on the jocular customs of manors.

The manor of Chetwode—a small village about five miles from Buckingham—has been the property of the Chetwode family from Saxon times. Though of small extent, it is the paramount manor of a liberty or district embracing several other manors and villages which are required to do suit and service at the court leet held at Chetwode every three years. The lord of Chetwode has also the right to levy a yearly tax, called the "Rhyne Toll," on all cattle found within this liberty between the 30th of October and the 7th of November, both days inclusive. The commencement of the toll, which was proclaimed with much ceremony, is thus described in the record of a trial in the reign of Queen Elizabeth:—

"In the beginning of the said Drift of the Common, or Rhyne, first at their going forth, they shall blow a welke-shell, or horne, immediately after the sunrising at the mansion-house of the manor of Chetwode, and then in their going about they shall blow their horne the second time in the field between Newton Purcell and Barton Hartshorne, in the said county of Bucks; and also shall blow their horne a third time at a place near the town of Fimmere, in the county of Oxford; and they shall blow their horne the fourth time at a certain stone in the market of the town of Buckingham, and there to give the poor sixpence; and so, going forward in this manner about the said Drift, shall blow

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connected with their claim to the Barony of De Wainnull, and an Account of the Chetwode Rhyne Toll. By Stephen Tucker, Esq., Somerset Herald in Ordinary. Fifty copies only: privately printed, 1884.

their horne at several bridges called Thornborough Bridge, King's Bridge, and Bridge Mill. And also they shall blow their horne at the Pound Gate, called the Lord's Pound, in the parish of Chetwode. . . . . And also (the Lord of Chetwode) has always been used by his officers and servants to drive away all foreign cattle that shall be found within the said parishes, fields, &c., to impound the same in any pound of the said towns, and to take for every one of the said foreign beasts twopence for the mouth and one penny for a foot for every one of the said beasts; and further, that the said officers and servants have always been used to take all cattle so taken and impounded by them within three days to the Lord's Pound at Chetwode, and if any cattle shall remain in the pound at Chetwode, and not be claimed at the end of the next three days, then the next day following, after the rising of the sun, the bailiff or officers of the lord for the time being, shall blow their horne three times at the gate of the said pound, and make proclamation that if any persons lack any cattle that shall be in in the same pound, let them come and shew the marks of the same cattle so claimed by them, and they shall have them, paying unto the lord his money in the manner and form before mentioned, otherwise the said cattle that shall so remain shall be the lord's as strays." This toll was formerly so rigidly enforced, that if the owner of cattle so impounded made his claim immediately after the proclamation was over, he was refused them, except by paying their full market price; and if he would not give the required sum, or none came forward, the cattle were at once driven to Warkworth, in Northamptonshire, and sold; whence arose a popular saying at Chetwode, that "Cattle that drank of Warkworth water never came back to Bucks."

The toll was collected till the inheritance of the present baronet. The following letter was addressed to Sir George Chetwode on this subject from his agents:—

"Buckingham, 19th February, 1875.

"Sir George,—Mr. Meadows\* having informed us that you had decided not to revive the collection of the Rhyne Toll, but would accept the shells we had obtained on the death of the old collector of the toll, we have packed them in a box just as we received them, and we are very pleased to present them to you, to be preserved among the relics of Chetwode. At the same time it may be interesting to you to have an account of the ancient right,

\* Agent at Oakley.

given to us in 1846 (when we received the Chetwode rents), by the same old collector, William Giles, who at the time rented the Rhyne (or Rhine) toll at £6 per annum.

"The Rhyne Toll commences at 12 p.m. on the 29th October (morning of 30th), and ends at 12 p.m. on the 7th November every year; and extends over nine townships, *viz.*, Prebend End, Gawcott, Lenborough, Bourton, Preston-cum-Cowley, Hillesley, Tingewick, Barton, and Chetwode. The payment is due on all cattle that travel on the drift in any part of it, or through the above townships (even from one field to another, if on the drift, but the farmers within the Rhyne usually compound by payment of a small sum, say 1s. per annum for their own stock), and the sum demandable is, on all beasts 6d. per head, sheep 5d. per head, and pigs 5d. per head. These sums are, however, now only demanded in some one instance every year to preserve the right, and the charge he takes in every other instance is 2s. per score, whether sheep, beast, or pigs. The plan of levying the Rhyne is this:—Boys are employed all over the Rhyne district, who, as it is called, Rhyne all the beasts, &c., they find on the drift by blowing a horn (or conch-shell, which they sling over their shoulders), then counting the number, and demanding the payment. Giles relates an instance in which a farmer and dealer refused to pay the Rhyne on some sheep passing through Gawcott, on which he had demanded about 15s. (at the rate of 2s. per score), that he went, on his refusal, to the then Steward of the Chetwode Court, who proceeded against the farmer, who had to pay the full demand and costs. The first thing each year Giles does is to get the boys together on Church Hill, Buckingham,—the church was formerly in Prebend End, —and at Finmere End, Tingewick, and give them gingerbread and ale; he then blows one of the shells, and cries, 'This is Sir John Chetwode's Rhyne Toll,' and then blows the shell again and begins the Rhyne. The object of this, he says, is that the boys may remember the Rhyne Toll, and that it is regularly kept up.

"We just mention that Browne Willis—the historian of Buckingham and its Hundred—states that the Lord of the Manor of Chetwode claims suit and service of the townships enumerated; but he says nothing about the Rhyne Toll, which is, however, traditionally held to have originated in a grant to one of your ancestors for slaying a Wild Boar which had ravaged those townships and destroyed their children.

We forward the box to-day by the L. & N. W. Railway, and we beg to remain,

"Sir George,

"Faithfully your obedient servants,

"Sir George Chetwode, Bart."

"Harrison and Son.

The existence of this toll may be traced to remote antiquity, but nothing is known of its origin except by local tradition. The



parish of Chetwode, as its name implies, was formerly thickly wooded; indeed it formed a part of an ancient forest, called Rookewood, which is supposed to have been conterminous with the present liberty of Chetwode. At a very early period it is said that this forest was infested with an enormous Wild Boar, which became the terror of the surrounding country. The inhabitants were never safe from his attacks; and strangers, who heard of his ferocity, were afraid to visit or pass through the district; so that traffic and friendly intercourse were seriously impeded, as well as much injury done to property, by this savage monster. The Lord of Chetwode, "a true and valiant knight," determined to rid his neighbours from this pest, or to die in the attempt. Bent on this generous purpose, he sallied forth into the forest, and, as the old song has it—

"Then he blowed a blast full north, south, east, and west—

Wind well thy horn, good hunter;

And the wild boar then heard him full in his den,

As he was a jovial hunter.

Then he made the best of his speed unto him—

Wind well thy horn, good hunter;

Swift flew the boar, with his tusks smeared with gore,

To Sir Ryalas, the jovial hunter.

Then the wild-boar, being so stout and so strong—

Wind well thy horn, good hunter;

Thrashed down the trees as he ramped him along,

To Sir Ryalas, the jovial hunter.

Then they fought four hours in a long summer day—

Wind well thy horn, good hunter;

Till the wild-boar fain would have got him away

From Sir Ryalas, the jovial hunter.

Then Sir Ryalas he drewed his broad sword with might—

Wind well thy horn, good hunter;

And he fairly cut the boar's head off quite,

For he was a jovial hunter.

Matters being thus settled, the neighbourhood rung with the praise of the gallant deed of the Lord of Chetwode, and the news thereof soon reached the ears of the King, who "liked him so well of the achievement" that he forthwith made the knight tenant *in capite*, and constituted his manor paramount of all the

manors within the limits and extent of the royal forest of Rookwoode. Moreover, he granted to him and to his heirs for ever, among other immunities and privileges, the full right and power to levy every year the Rhyne Toll, which has already been described.

Such is the story of the Chetwode tradition, which has descended unquestioned from time immemorial, and received, about forty years ago, an apparently singular confirmation. Within a mile of Chetwode Manor-house there existed a large mound, surrounded by a ditch, and bearing the name of the "Boar's Pond." It had long been overgrown with gorse and brushwood, when, about the year 1810, the tenant, to whose farm it belonged, wishing to bring it into cultivation, began to fill up the ditch by levelling the mound. Having lowered the latter about four feet, he found some bones, supposed to be those of an enormous boar. Probably this was the spot where it was killed, the earth around having been heaped over it so as to form the ditch and mound. The space formerly thus occupied can still be traced. It extends about thirty feet in length and eighteen in width, and the field containing it is yet called the "Boar's Head Field." The jaw and other portions of the skeleton are now in the possession of Sir George Chetwode, Bart., the present lord of the manor.\*

There is a somewhat similar tradition at Boarstall, which stands within the limits of Bernewood Forest, as Chetwode does within those of Rookwoode.† These forests formerly adjoined, and formed a favourite hunting district of Edward the Confessor and his successors, who had a palace or hunting-lodge at Burghill (Brill), where the two forests met.

That the mere killing of a Boar should be so richly rewarded may appear incredible. But many a Wild Boar of old was so powerful and ferocious that he would attack a lion; while such was his stubborn courage that he would never yield till actually killed or disabled. The classic reader may here recall to mind the celebrated tale, in Greek mythology, of the Calydonian Boar that ravaged the fields of Ætolia, and was ultimately slain by

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\* A jaw-bone submitted to Prof. Flower was identified by him as that of a horse, and two large teeth proved to be molars of *Elephas primigenius*.

† This tradition, with some remarks on the former occurrence of the Wild Boar in Buckinghamshire, will be found in Harting's 'Extinct British Animals,' p. 80.

Meleager, with the help of Theseus, Jason, and other renowned heroes. Such, indeed, was the nature of the Wild Boar, that most of the early poets have chosen it as the fittest animal to illustrate the indomitable courage of their heroes; thus Homer:—

“Forth from the portals rushed the intrepid pair,  
Opposed their breasts, and stood themselves the war.  
So two wild-boars spring furious from their den,  
Roused with the cries of dogs and voice of men;  
On every side the crackling trees they tear,  
And root the shrubs, and lay the forest bare;  
They gnash their tusks, with fire their eyeballs roll,  
Till some wide wound lets out their mighty soul.”

And Spenser, perhaps not without the charge of plagiarism, has the same illustration:—

“So long they fight, and fell revenge pursue,  
That fainting, each themselves to breathe let,  
And oft refreshed, battle oft renew,  
As when two boars with rankling malice met.  
Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely fret,  
Till breathless both, themselves aside retire,  
Where foaming wrath their cruel tusks they whet,  
And trample the earth the while they may respire;  
Then back to fight again, new breathed and entire.”

Such animals were most dangerous, not only to travellers and unarmed rustics, but to the hunting expeditions of the King and his nobles. It need not, therefore, surprise us to find that the destruction of a Wild Boar ranked, in the Middle Ages, among the deeds of chivalry, and won for a warrior almost as much renown as the slaying of an enemy in the open field. So dangerous, indeed, was the hunting of Wild Boars, even when the hunter was armed for the purpose, that Shakespeare represents Venus as dissuading Adonis from the practice:—

“O, be advised! Thou knowest not what it is  
With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore,  
Whose tushes never-sheath'd, he whetteth still,  
Like to a mortal butcher, bent to kill.  
His brawny sides, with hairy bristles arm'd,  
Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter;  
His short thick neck cannot be easily harm'd;  
Being ireful, on the lion he will venture.”

Such hunting expeditions were generally fatal to some of the dogs, and occasionally to one or more of the hunters. Such was the case with Robert de Vere, ninth Earl of Oxford, who was killed in 1395 by the Boar he was pursuing.

The knight of Chetwode, then, who from benevolent motives encountered and slew the Boar that ravaged his neighbourhood, deserved to be richly rewarded; and what reward could be more appropriate than the privilege of claiming a yearly toll over those roads which he had thus rendered secure? Perhaps, too, the exacting of the toll for nine days was to commemorate the period during which the gallant knight persisted before he achieved his object.

Such customs as the Rhyne Toll are not without their uses. They are perpetual memorials, perhaps more convincing than written history, of the dangers which surrounded our ancestors, and from which our country has happily been so long delivered that we can now scarcely believe they ever existed."

In the opinion of sportsmen who have had experience in hunting the Wild Boar, whether in India (where "pig sticking" is a favourite amusement) or in other countries, no wild animal is harder to kill, being most tenacious of life, and offering a most stubborn resistance when brought to bay. The correctness of this assertion has been well illustrated by a well-known Indian sportsman, Capt. Shakespeare, in an account of a personal adventure with a Boar in India, which is so graphically written as to deserve quotation here:—

"While beating the sugar-canes (he says) for Wild Hogs, a few miles from Hingolu, a villager came and said, 'If you want to see a Hog, come with me'; and leading the way over the brow of a hill, pointed out an object in a field below, that in the mist of the morning appeared like a large blue rock, much too large for a Hog. However, the object presently got on its legs, and dissipated every doubt existing as to its character. About a hundred yards distant from the animal was a fissure in the hills, thickly wooded, and here, no doubt, was the Boar's lair; and if he took alarm and rushed thither, it would be next to impossible to dislodge him. A savage Boar in his stronghold is as difficult to oust as the Grizzly Bear from his winter cave in the Rocky Mountains. He constantly rushes out, knocks over and gores the beaters nearest the mouth of his retreat, and then skips back again before there is the shadow of a chance of spearing him."



After describing the way in which he managed to place himself between the Boar and his retreat, Capt. Shakespeare continues:—

“Standing as I was, behind a hedge considerably higher than my mare’s head, I did not see the Boar. The duffadar (native officer) was some thirty yards to my left, and, looking over a lower part of the hedge, shouted out, ‘Here he comes!’ The mare was standing still, and I had but just time to drop my spear-point, which caught the Boar in the rise, and the blade was buried in his withers. My mare, from her standing position, cleared with one bound the Boar, spear and all, as this was carried out of my hand; then suddenly turning, was in her stride after the Hog. The Hog had but seventy yards to reach the jungle, and just as he struck the first branch of the jungle with his back, breaking in two the shaft of my spear (which was still fast in his body), the duffadar closed with him. The Boar, having been missed by the spear, ran under the duffadar’s horse, and for thirty yards lifted him off his legs, plunging and kicking till the rider came to the ground. Fortunately we had three dogs with us; and having shouted to the people to let them go, they came up and took the attention of the Boar at the moment he was on the duffadar, who had fallen on his sword and broken it, and was utterly helpless. The next moment the Boar made full tilt for his stronghold, the dogs following close at his heels. Armed with a fresh spear, I rode up the face of the hill, and from thence, looking down, saw the Boar at bay and surrounded by the hounds, but in such a situation that it was impossible on horseback to go to the assistance of the dogs. At this moment one of the beaters came running up with a heavy double-barrelled rifle, and being apprehensive that the hounds would be speedily slaughtered if not relieved, I took the gun, and dismounting, resolved to attack the Boar on foot. Just as I got to the bottom, I saw the monster Boar with his back to a tree, and the three dogs looking very cautiously at him. He was about forty yards from me. Directly he saw me, putting his head down a little to take aim, he came straight at me, increasing his pace from the trot to the charge. When about fifteen yards off, he received the first bullet of my rifle in his neck. Taking not the least notice of it, he came on, and the second barrel fired at him, at about five yards, broke his left under jaw-bone at the tusk. Fortunately I brought my rifle down to the charge, and, striking it with his head, the Boar sent

me over on my back. While running over me he made a glance, and wounded me in the left arm. Had I not put down my rifle-barrel at the moment, most probably his tusks would have been buried in my body. As it was, I had two shooting-jackets on, it being a very cold morning, and I suffered more from the jar than the wound. As I lay, I seized the end of my rifle-barrel, determined to sell my life as dearly as possible. To my delight, I must say, I saw the Boar knock over the man who was running down with my big spear. He did not turn on either of us; for the Boar is a noble foe, rarely turning, unless desperately wounded and unable to go on, to mutilate a fallen enemy. The dogs immediately tackled him, and permitted me, though almost breathless, to get up. The rifle-stock was cracked, and the pin that fastens the barrel into the stock much bent. Having put this to rights, I loaded, and, proceeding in the direction the Boar had gone, came up to within fifteen yards of where he had halted and stood regarding me vengefully. Taking aim I sent a bullet through his eye into his brain, and rolled him over dead. I have stated that the Boar is the most courageous animal in the jungle. There he was; with a broken spear in his withers, the shaft sticking up a foot and a half from the blade; knocking over a horseman and wounding his horse; receiving two bullets,—ten to the pound,—the first in his neck and throat, the second breaking his jaw, and fired within a few feet of his muzzle; making good his charge, cutting down his enemy like grass, wounding him; knocking over a second man armed with a spear; defying the dogs; and then, in the act of charging again, shot in the brain, and dying without a groan."

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## WAYSIDE NOTES FROM THE CONTINENT.

BY JOHN CORDEAUX.

WHEN running for Vlissingen Harbour, at the mouth of the West Schelde, on the morning of May 23rd, I noticed a large number of Terns beating for food. There must have been nearly two hundred, both the Common and the Arctic, but the former considerably in excess.

In Belgium bird-life appears as well represented as in our eastern counties, and although the carriage of an express train is not the most satisfactory position for identifying anything beyond

the most familiar species, yet it is surprising in the course of a long journey, and with the aid of a binocular, how much can be done; and at least it may be said the occupation secures one good purpose in whiling away the time, and adding also something of interest to an otherwise dull and uninteresting route. With the help of the glass I was able to make out many of our common home birds, and two new ones, the White and the Blue-headed Wagtail. Herons were especially numerous, either standing unconcernedly by the sides of the drains or flapping lazily across the swampy meadows. Cormorants not uncommon in the neighbourhood of the great estuaries; a few Sheldrake on the oozy flats; Curlews, and some smaller waders which looked very much like Knot. In the marshes Rooks, Starlings, and Lapwings were abundant.

At Wesel we are in another land, crossing the Rhine by an iron bridge with a strong *tête du pont*, where the blue-coated and brass-helmed sentinels of Prussia keep their ceaseless watch from the summit of big earthworks, and from grass-grown embrasures black muzzles of heavy guns protrude like crouching bulldogs sullenly guarding the frontier. The route from Wesel by Hanover to Berlin, excepting some small portions of Westphalia, is singularly uninteresting, vast level plains of a naturally poor and sterile soil, yet wherever capable the untiring energy and patient toil of the German peasant has raised them to the highest pitch of cultivation. Then there are vast tracks of pine-forest, where the trees are dwarfed and stunted, and much silver birch; but everywhere a scarcity of timber. Interminable stretches of brown heath, as level as a billiard-table, support the scantiest vegetation, where grey stones and sand crop out in bare patches.

I have frequently noticed how rarely during a long railway-journey on the Continent, compared with our own country, we see any game. In this long day of fifteen hours by rail I did not see a single Partridge, Pheasant, or Rabbit. Only some half-dozen Hares were feeding in the twilight on the outskirts of the corn strips, and two or three Deer in the forests.

On the sandy plains near Hanover I first noticed Crested Larks (*Haubenlerche*); they are readily distinguishable in flight, even at a considerable distance, by the light buff-brown of the outer tail-feathers, and the absence of any white.

On the afternoon of May 28th I spent some hours in the beautiful Palace Gardens at Charlottenburg, near Berlin. The bird most frequently seen perhaps was the Black Redstart (*Haus-Rothschwänzchen*), almost as familiar in its habits as our Redbreast, and having at a short distance much the character and look of that bird as it sits perched on some conspicuous place, a flower-stick, iron-fencing, or one of the ornamental vases so plentiful in German gardens. The Nightingale (*Nachtigall*) was also very numerous, and I heard five or six all singing at the same time; also the Garden Warbler (*Gartengrasmücke*) and Blackcap, but the former much more common. Every day I used to hear Nightingales singing within a hundred yards of the Brandenburg Gate.

I found the Black Redstart also numerous in the gardens of the villas on the heights south of Dresden overlooking the Elbe; indeed it appears to be everywhere far more plentiful than the Common Redstart (*Garten-Rothschwänzchen*). Of the latter I only saw a few, generally about the outskirts of the forests and open places in the woods. Very favourite haunts of the Black Redstart are outbuildings in gardens, and courts and stable-yards, where the walls are covered with roses, jasmine, and trailing masses of the Virginian creeper. I have frequently noticed the male bird on the summit of a vine-stake, hawking from this perch at the passing insects, and in these short flights displaying the strongly contrasting slate-grey and bright chestnut, which are his predominant colours. Seen thus, under an almost tropical sun, he seems essentially best fitted for warmth and sunshine, yet it is a curious fact that late in autumn many come westward to winter on our south-western coast, and, stranger still, appear to find a congenial home amongst the chill mists and drifting scud of the wave-worn skerries and isolated rocks on the Irish coasts (see 'Report on the Migration of Birds,' 1885, pp. 144-5).

Another common bird in the Dresden gardens is the Icterine Warbler (*Garten-Laubsänger*). When once heard it is impossible ever to mistake the song for that of any other of the small Warblers; it is composed of an extraordinary medley of notes, now its own and then imitative, expressed with the greatest energy, persistence, and power—a song full of melody, mixed, however, with notes that seem harsh, incongruous, and even grating. The



song, indeed, although especially powerful and attractive, is not to be compared with that of the Nightingale or Blackcap in compass, quality, or sweetness. It is as the mingled clash and wild melody of barbaric music compared with the polished strains and cultivated periods of civilisation—the finished opera singer and the gipsy with her tambourine. I agree with Mr. Seebohm that “it has great power, wonderful variety, and considerable compass, but it is singularly deficient in melody” (‘British Birds,’ vol. i., p. 382). In its habits it is bold and confident, and has little of the skulking, shelter-loving character of the leaf-warblers, preferring to sing in a conspicuous place, on the outer branch of an ornamental tree, or from the summit of a young cypress or fir. With a binocular I have watched it closely,—when under a brilliant sun the little creature for ten minutes at a time, with swollen throat and gaping beak (displaying the lemon-coloured fauces), has fairly quivered with the utterance of its own wild music,—astonished not a little that so small a bird should give forth notes which seemed more adapted to the powers of a Blackbird or Thrush. Gay little mocking-bird,—for justly art thou so called,—should ever I hear thy song again it will recall pleasant Pillnitz and its gardens, and the sunny vine-terraced slopes of the Saxon Elbe. The alarm-note is loud and discordant; it reminded me something of that of the Lesser Whitethroat, but is much louder and more expressive of anger and annoyance.

In the château gardens of Pillnitz I heard the four clear flute-like notes of the Golden Oriole (*Pirol*), but only once succeeded, after much patient watching, in seeing the bird as it flew from the top of one high tree to another; a beautiful and attractive object in contrasting black and bright gamboge-yellow.

In the same gardens, which are seven miles above Dresden, I saw the Spotted Flycatcher, Common and Lesser Whitethroats, Wood Wren, Garden Warbler, and Nightingale. The Lesser Whitethroat was particularly numerous; on one occasion I was a witness to the extreme solicitude of the female in trying to draw attention from its young brood, three or four little grey dots fresh from the nest, perched in the shrubs; down dashed the mother, fluttering at my feet in the most helpless manner, first dragging one wing and then the other along the pathway, nor did she cease

until I was led—willingly compliant to her little artifices—far from the objects of her solicitude.

I was a good deal puzzled, when at Dresden, by the notes of a small bird in the Grosser Garten; subsequently I heard the same little song at Pillnitz in a cherry-orchard, and soon saw the bird perched on an upper twig, which had shot up to some height above one of the fruit-trees; not more than four feet from where I stood was a rain-puddle in a rut, when, as I was wishing for a closer acquaintance, down flew the little songster and commenced drinking, and I was delighted to perceive it was a male Serin Finch. I was not then aware that the Serin Finch (*Girlitz*) has in recent years become common in that part of Saxony (see Mr. Seebohm's 'British Birds,' vol. ii., p. 84). Subsequently I saw one at Pillnitz, singing on the wing, and descending very much like a Tree Pipit on to the summit of a walnut-tree in a garden close to a dwelling-house. I heard and saw the Siskin (*Erlenseisig*) in the forest near Herrenskretchen, in Bohemia; also the Coal Tit and Nuthatch.

The Elbe-banks for some miles above and below Dresden offer very suitable haunts for various aquatic warblers. They are either fringed with willow-holts, or broken by backwaters, overgrown with reeds and dense scrub. There are also many pits of considerable extent and for miles in succession, from which I conjecture the earth has been taken at some time to raise the flood-banks. These places are choked with rank vegetation, alders and willows, with an undergrowth of sedges, rushes and brambles, and numerous pools of clear water overgrown with water-lilies and pond-weeds. These are just the sort of places we should expect to find swarming with the water-loving warblers. Yet the results of several hours spent in these localities were disappointing. Sedge Warblers seemed fairly common, but not nearly so generally distributed as in North Lincolnshire.

I saw one Aquatic Warbler, *Acrocephalus aquaticus*, attention being first attracted by its song, which struck me as differing from the Sedge Warbler's, the notes being not nearly so varied or the song so loud. With the glass I was also able to make out the light median stripe down the centre of the head. I cannot say if it is common, I should rather say not, as it was the only example I came across, and I spent many hours, in fact all one morning, in the search. The only other warbler seen was a

reddish-coloured bird, very shy and retiring, and particularly chary of its notes, which commenced at intervals, with much promise of a continuance, ceased as suddenly; it was so skulking that I never got my glass fairly upon it, and had to give it up at last; not reluctantly, as the closeness of the swamp was overpowering, the heat of the sun at noon having on that day been  $85^{\circ}$  in the shade. In this same place I noticed three young Blue-headed Wagtails sitting together on a dead branch over one of the pools, the old birds coming at times to feed them with insects. This Wagtail (*Gelbe Schafstelze*) seems not uncommon in the Elbe meadows and along the river. The White Wagtail (*Weisse Bachstelze*) extremely plentiful; I invariably saw a pair about the wooden landing-stages where the steamboats call to take in or discharge passengers and goods, also very often a pair or two on the long rafts of timber which are constantly passing down stream. Some ornithologists assert that the call-note of this species is distinguishable from that of our English Pied Wagtail, but I failed to perceive this. With regard to the songs of birds on the Continent, those of the Thrush and Blackbird struck me as decidedly varying from the same as heard in my own garden in England, and still more so those of the Chaffinch and Yellowhammer. In the Saxon Switzerland I noticed a pair of Grey Wagtails, *Motacilla melanope*, by the side of a small trout-stream; these were the only examples I saw in Germany.

I saw the Green Woodpecker twice near Dresden, and the Middle-spotted Woodpecker (*Picus medius*) in the pine-forest near Herrenskretchen. In various localities a few Buzzards and Kites; one Marsh Harrier beating over some swampy meadows on the Ilmenau, near Lüneburg. Of the smaller raptorial birds a few Kestrels and Sparrowhawks, and a Merlin; the latter on the sand-dunes near Dunkirk, in France, a locality which, from the great abundance of Wheatears, Whinchats, and other small birds, must be a happy hunting-ground for the small *Falconide*. These wide sea-dunes on the South Belgian and French coast would doubtless prove an excellent station for an ornithologist in the autumn, and yield a great many rarities when the stream of migrants, which we know follows the west coast of Europe, is passing southward. There is an abundance of shelter, such as small birds delight in, amongst the dense thickets of sallow thorn, the grey-blue patches of sea-holly, and immense extent of

tall sea-grass (marram)—the same characteristic plants which we find growing on the Lincolnshire coast and the warrens of the Spurn, but on an infinitely more extended scale.

Black-headed Gulls are constantly beating to and fro on the Elbe, in Dresden, and also Terns, both the Common and Lesser. On one occasion I noticed a pair of the latter hovering above a pit opposite the new Rifle Barracks. At Pillnitz there is an island in the Elbe covered with tall trees and dense brushwood; at one end a bank of coarse gravel and shingle extends some distance into the stream, with here and there single willows and alder-bushes, and a few coarse plants. About ten pairs of Common and two pairs of the Lesser Tern frequented this spot, where they were evidently nesting; but I had no opportunity of verifying this by visiting the ground, as access is *verboten*, a very common and characteristic word in the Fatherland, to be met with at every turn. Just opposite the island the view from the road above the steamboat-landing is as fine as any in the neighbourhood, commanding the broad sweep of the Elbe through an undulating and highly-cultivated and luxuriant country, rich in corn and hop-gardens, and vineyards; the red tiles and white-washed walls of scattered villages and farmsteads contrasting with the silver-greys and cool greens of the landscape. In the middle distance, on a wooded hill more than eight hundred feet above the Elbe, stands the imposing fortress of Königstein; beyond this at varying distances the extraordinary geological formation of Saxon Switzerland, each hill rising abruptly like so many titanic rock castles, with precipitous flanks, high above the dark pine-forests stretching away in endless succession into Bohemia; to the south are the low rounded hills, the first spurs of the Erzgebirge: the faint outline of the higher range hardly visible, melting and mingling into the cobalt-blue of the furthest horizon.

The *Hirundinidæ* are all numerously represented on the Upper Elbe, and I do not recollect ever having seen so many Swifts as at Dresden. They career in great troops all day over the city, wheeling for hours around the lofty domes and towers of the chief buildings, and rush chasing and screaming with wild excitement beneath the arches of the old bridge which unites the two towns, careless of that ever-changing and ceaseless crowd of humanity passing to and fro in a double stream above. I never



crossed this bridge without a thought of a certain 26th of August, seventy-three years ago, when fair Dresden was girdled with a ring of fire, and contending nations piled the beautiful Grosser Garten with their dead and dying in desperate efforts to beat back the vanguard of Napoleon's army, which, to the number of 60,000, was unceasingly pushed across this grey old Augustusbrücke into the Altstadt through all the doubtful hours of that gigantic conflict.

Except in the low countries,—Holland and Belgium,—Rooks and Starlings are much less numerous than in England; to be accounted for, perhaps, by the absence of anything like extensive tracts of grass-land. The Grey Crow is common everywhere, and leads a life of unrestricted happiness, undisturbed by game-keepers or dreams of strychnined eggs; they nest everywhere in the woods and forests, and in the parks and public grounds, and are always to be seen in considerable numbers, foraging along the banks of the Elbe with all the boldness and familiarity of a favoured species. After seeing the Grey Crow in Germany, one may cease to wonder at the countless flights which cross the North Sea in October into our eastern counties.

Much credit is due in North Germany to all classes of the people for their uniform kindness and thoughtfulness where birds are concerned. I have seen a nest of half-fledged Blackbirds continue undisturbed, and with the old birds feeding them, in a rose-tree close to a much-frequented thoroughfare, and fully exposed to every passer by. Under similar circumstances in England, the young would not have remained unmolested for five minutes.

On June 11th, when travelling from Dresden by Leipsig and Magdeburg to Hamburg, I noticed a Goshawk, several Buzzards, numerous Crested Larks and Turtle Doves, and more Partridges than I had seen in any other district in Germany. In the meadows near Hamburg, many Herons and two or three Storks. At a station where we remained some minutes I saw the Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*) on the top of a six-foot pine growing on some waste land close to some houses. I had a very good look at this bird through the binocular, and had not the least doubt as to the species.

June 12th.—When off Cuxhaven this morning, twenty-seven Grey Geese passed, flying north. About noon the same day two

of the large white cabbage butterflies passed the steamer without attempting to alight, travelling from N.E. to S.W. We were then eighty-five miles W.N.W. of the Elbe mouth. About half-way over the North Sea I noticed four very large Gulls on the water right in our track; on nearing them they rose and flew off south; all four were Glaucous Gulls, two in adult plumage, the others mottled with pale brown. I was surprised to see these marine vultures so far south in the latitude of the Spurn at this time of the year.

June 20th.—Strong N. wind and heavy sea. When coasting between Dunkirk and Ostend to-day, we passed through immense numbers of the Common Scoter; more, indeed, than I have ever seen on any previous occasion and in any season in the North Sea; one flock alone probably contained from two to three thousand, another about half that number; besides these, many smaller flocks; they were continuously scattered along several miles of the North French and Belgian coast, and were particularly wild and wary, rising as a rule quite a quarter of a mile away, small groups only or solitary birds sometimes remaining till within long gunshot.

## NOTES AND QUERIES.

**The British Association.**—The fifty-sixth annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science will commence on Wednesday, September 1st, 1886, under the Presidency of Sir William Dawson, C.M.G., F.R.S., &c. (Principal of McGill College, Montreal), who will take the place of Sir Lyon Playfair. The Vice-Presidents are the Earl of Bradford, Lord Leigh, Lord Norton, Lord Wrothesley, the Lord Bishop of Worcester, the Mayor of Birmingham (Mr. Thomas Martineau), Prof. Stokes, Prof. Tilden, the Rev. A. R. Vardy, M.A., and the Rev. H. W. Watson, F.R.S. The General Secretaries are Capt. Douglas Galton, C.B., F.R.S., and Mr. A. G. Vernon Harcourt, M.A., F.R.S.: Secretary, Mr. A. T. Atchison, M.A., and Local Hon. Secretaries, Messrs. H. W. Crosskey, J. B. Carslake, and C. J. Hart. The officers for Section D. *Biology*, are—President, Mr. W. Carruthers, F.R.S.; Vice-Presidents, Prof. Schaffer, F.R.S., and Mr. P. L. Selater, F.R.S., Sec.Z.S.; Secretaries, Prof. T. W. Bridge, M.A., Walter Heape (Recorder), Prof. W. Hillhouse,

M.A., Messrs. W. L. Slater, B.A., and H. Marshall Ward, M.A. We have been favoured by the Local Hon. Secretaries with an excellent programme (in pamphlet form) of the local arrangements, the object of which is to supply Members and Associates with information on all subjects specially connected with the meeting of the Association, which, judging from the list of lectures, exhibitions, field-meetings and garden parties already arranged promises to be a very enjoyable one.

**Death of Mr. George Busk, F.R.S.**—It is with much regret that we have to announce the death of Mr. George Busk, the well-known surgeon and naturalist, which took place in London on August 10th. As a Fellow of the Royal, Linnean, Zoological, and Microscopical Societies, and a contributor to their 'Transactions' and 'Proceedings,' Mr. Busk had a wide circle of acquaintance. At the College of Surgeons, of which learned body he was a Fellow, he had served on the Council and as President, besides filling for a time the chair of Hunterian Professor. Zoologists are indebted to him for translations of Steenstrup's work, 'On the Alternations of Generations,' and Kölliker's 'Manual of Histology.' As a *specialité* he worked chiefly at the Polyzoa, of which he published a British Museum catalogue, and (in 1884) an important monograph of the Polyzoa collected during the voyage of the 'Challenger.' As a palæontologist and anthropologist he was also very favourably known, having contributed several useful memoirs to the 'Proceedings' of Societies dealing with these subjects. His death, at the age of seventy-eight, will be deplored by a large circle of friends to whom his amiability and readiness at all times to impart information had deservedly endeared him.

**Collecting in Morocco.**—We hear that M. Henri Vaucher has taken up his quarters at Tangiers for the purpose of making zoological collections. Any one who may desire to secure specimens of the mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, or shells of Morocco will have now a good opportunity, and are invited to communicate with him direct. The address, M. Henri Vaucher, Tangiers, Morocco, will suffice.

#### MAMMALIA.

**Albino Badgers.**—It may interest some of your readers to know that I received on September 1st, 1885, two half-grown albinos of the Common Badger alive, from East Cornwall, where they had been dug out with their dam from an earth in a large wood on the banks of the Tamar, a few days before the above date. These beasts, which are still alive and well here, cannot be called white; their general colour is of a very pale sandy, the face-stripes of a somewhat darker shade than the other parts, and the eyes pink, or red-currant coloured. I have seen albinos of many of our

indigenous Mammalia, but never before met with this variety in the present species.—LILFORD (Lilford Hall, Oundle).

[White Badgers are occasionally reported, but are probably not very common. Records of the capture of individuals of this variety will be found in 'The Field' of 29th June, 1872; 'Zoologist,' 1872, p. 3180; 'Field,' 1st May, 1875; and 'Zoologist,' 1880, p. 252. On the 30th April, 1885, the terriers belonging to the Vine Kennels, at Overton, Hants, found and secured two dog Badgers in one hole, one of which was described to us as being "like a white Ferret with pink eyes."—ED.]

**White Whale on the Coast of Devon.**—Mr. J. C. Willcocks, a good authority on such matters, assured me that one day at the end of July he had a good view of a Beluga, or White Whale, *Delphinapterus leucas*, as it rose off the Bolt Head, close to the steam tug 'Perseverance,' in which vessel he was a passenger at the time.—J. GATCOMBE (55, Durnford Street, Stonehouse, Devon).

**White-beaked Dolphin at Lowestoft.**—On the 6th July last a friend of mine saw on the fish-wharf at Lowestoft a Cetacean which, from his description, was undoubtedly a White-beaked Dolphin, *Lagenorhynchus albirostris*. It was brought in by the Lowestoft boats, having been captured in their nets. From its size, about four feet in length, it was evidently immature; the sex was not observed. The fishermen spoke of it as a "Scoulter," and pointed out to my friend the features which distinguished it from a porpoise. I have stated elsewhere that this species is certainly known to the Yarmouth and Lowestoft fishermen by the name of "Scoulter," but whether any other species, as, for instance, *D. tursio*, is also so called, I am at present uncertain. The date of the capture of this individual corresponds with that of the Berwick specimen (1881), and is the earliest autumn record I have met with; the months of August and September having produced the greatest number. This is the twelfth occurrence of this species which has come to my knowledge on the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, but as in this and some other instances the identification of the species has been purely accidental, it is probable that others have been overlooked. It is a matter of regret that there is no resident naturalist in Lowestoft to record the many good things which must be doubtless often brought in by the fishing vessels of that port.—THOMAS SOUTHWELL (Norwich).

#### BIRDS.

**Breeding of the Shoveller in Nottinghamshire.**—About six years ago I noticed the first pair of Shovellers, *Anas clypeata*, on the waters here, and since then they have increased, until this year we have at least ten pairs nesting. During the last three years I have tried in vain to find



a nest. Last year I particularly wanted to get one, as Mr. Seebohm had no authenticated down for description in his work on British Birds. At last a keeper found a Shoveller Duck sitting, but, not wishing to disturb the nest, left her, and when I heard of it, she had hatched all the eggs. I at once sent the nest as it was to Mr. Seebohm, and he described the down in his work (vol. iii., p. 556). During the present summer we were determined, if possible, to get a nest, and on June 22nd Mrs. Whitaker found one in some mowing grass near the house. Strange to relate, the male bird was sitting on the eggs, which were three in number, smaller than those of the Wild Duck or Tufted Duck, of an oval shape and rich cream colouring. The nest was made of pulled grass mixed with down, which is grey with large white spots in the centre of each tuft. These eggs were the first authentic ones taken in this county. I am pleased to add that the Shovellers are now steadily increasing every year. They lay very late, no young ones being seen before the second week in June. The nest is always placed away from water, and they seem very fond of mowing grass. When the same field was cut we found another nest with a rotten egg in it. When these ducks pair in spring they may be seen chasing each other on the wing sometimes as long as ten minutes, the call-note sounding like "took-took." In flying the feet are held quite an inch above the tail, apparently to give a good balance, as the wings are very far back. The Shoveller keeps her young ones away from the ponds till quite grown up, and rears them in the water-carriers in the mowing meadows.—J. WHITAKER (Rainworth Lodge, Mansfield, Notts).

**The Icterine Warbler.**—I have read with interest the notes of your correspondents (pp. 333, 334) on the supposed Icterine Warblers. It may perhaps be useful to remark that in addition to the large size of this species, as compared with any other *Phylloscopus*, the colour of the breast of the living bird is of a peculiarly delicate yellow, which I have never seen in any other British form. Moreover, the tarsi and toes are of a uniform slate-grey. Both adults and nestlings are to be seen exposed for sale in the Paris Marché des Oiseaux.—H. A. MACPHERSON.

**Rooks nesting on Chimney-tops.**—When on a visit to Thurso in May last, I was surprised to see Rooks nesting on chimney-stacks of houses in that town. I was informed that some Rooks near there had nested on the ground on the side of a hill, the trees on which they had previously built having been destroyed.—L. H. IRBY (Wadenhoe, Oundle).

[Very few instances seem to have been recorded of Rooks departing, as above described, from their usual well-known nesting-habits. Two nests are said to have been built on housetops at Kingston-on-Hull in 1846 (Zool. p. 1366), and a pair of these birds, in 1869, attempted to build a nest on a stone head projecting under the eaves of Swaffham Church (Zool. 1869,

p. 1910), but the sticks and other materials used were constantly stolen by their companions, and they gave up the attempt.—ED.]

**The Tree Sparrow in Skye.**—After some years of unremitting search for the Tree Sparrow in Skye, I have at last discovered its presence at Uig, in the north of the island. Mr. J. J. Dalgleish was the first to note its appearance on the west coast at Ardnanmurchan, and since then the presence of the species in St. Kilda and Eigg has been vouched for by Mr. Charles Dixon, Mr. W. Evans, and myself; while Mr. Harvie Brown has also vigilantly followed the extension of its breeding range to a third insular locality, the fourth and last being the present Skye record. I visited the Eigg colony of Tree Sparrows again this year, and observed newly fledged young on July 15th, 1886. When Mr. Evans paid a flying visit to Eigg he overlooked the House Sparrow's presence in the island, not from want of energy, but because while the Eigg Tree Sparrow frequents the old walls about a farm-stead, the House Sparrow in this locality, perversely enough confines, itself-entirely to a sea cliff, where it rests in the ivy, about a hundred and fifty yards from the Tree Sparrow's haunts. When visiting different parts of Skye this summer, I was much struck by the increase in House Sparrows, which are becoming very numerous. Possibly there are other colonies of the Tree Sparrow in the island, which will be discovered later on.—H. A. MACPHERSON (3, Kensington Gardens Square, W.)

**Fearlessness of the Spotted Flycatcher.**—As an instance of the fearlessness and confidence displayed by the Spotted Flycatcher (*M. grisola*) in the choice of public situation for the purpose of nidification, I may adduce the following as worthy of notice. This season a pair have built their nest in the most frequented situation at the Spa, Scarborough. The site chosen is upon a projection between the top of the door and the fan-light of the south-east tower of the building, and directly opposite the orchestra, the gilded finial of which forms a convenient post, whence they watch for their prey or perch a few moments before taking it to their young, when they are obliged to pass within a few feet of numbers of persons; occasionally they alight on the back of one of the chairs, during the performance of the band, without showing the least alarm. The birds attract no attention, and the nest has only been noticed by one or two of the attendants who have orders to protect it.—R. P. HARPER (2, Royal Crescent, Scarborough).

**Blackcap and Grasshopper Warbler in Co. Mayo.**—The first authentic instance of the Blackcap breeding in this western district has been discovered this summer by Miss Knox Gore, who on the 14th of May recognised the fine song of the male bird in her brother's demesne of Belleek Manor, and a few days afterwards, in a thicket close by, found the

nest with five eggs and the female hatching. Having frequently in the South of France seen and heard the Blackcap in full song, Miss Knox-Gore easily recognised its song and appearance beyond the possibility of mistake. The discovery of the Grasshopper Warbler visiting this district is also due to the observation of this lady, who met with the bird at Coolcronan, the demesne of Mr. E. H. Pery, situated on the banks of the River Moy, about four miles from Ballina. The Blackcap is a regular summer visitor, but very local in its habits, visiting but few districts in Ireland, chiefly in the eastern counties, and occasionally in the south. Thompson only mentions one instance of its occurrence in this province, and that was in winter, when an individual was shot near Tuam, Co. Galway, on the 1st November, 1842. Mr. A. G. More, in his List of Irish Birds, mentions it breeding in the counties Dublin, Wicklow, and Tipperary, and probably in Antrim also. It appears to be rather common about Fassaroe and the surrounding district in the Co. Wicklow a few miles beyond Bray.—ROBERT WARREN (Moyview Ballina, Co. Mayo.)

**Iceland Falcon in Skye.**—I had lately the pleasure of examining an Iceland Falcon, shot in Skye last March by my friend Captain McDonald, of Waternish. I understand that Mr. Macleay inadvertently recorded it in an Inverness paper as the Greenland bird, of which Captain McDonald shot a fine specimen two years before (Zool. 1884, p. 383). The recent bird is, as unquestionably, *islandicus*.—H. A. MACPHERSON (3, Kensington Gardens Square, W.)

**Greyhen in plumage of Blackcock.**—A female Black Grouse, *Tetrao tetrix*, was shot here, on August 20th, with elongated tail-feathers turned outwards in the form of a lyre, measuring about seven inches in length, as in the male. Can any naturalist inform me whether it is common to find the female Black Grouse in this plumage?—JAMES SARGENT (Nith Cottage, New Cumnock).

[The assumption of the male plumage by hen birds is a phenomenon well known to poultry breeders, and has been repeatedly noticed in the case of Pheasants. We believe that in all cases wherein dissection was made after death this curious condition was found to be correlated with disease of the ovaries.—ED.]

**Breeding of the Forked-tailed Petrel on the Blasquets, Co. Kerry.**—I have received a Petrel's egg, pure white, which from its size (1.27 by .94 in.) must belong to this species. It was taken on the Tearaght, a lofty rocky island, one of the outermost of the Blasquets, which lie off the Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry, and was taken there by the light-keeper, Mr. Ryan, on the 1st July last. He sent it to me with eggs of the Storm Petrel, which breeds numerously both on the Tearaght and other islands in the same group. Mr. Ryan merely remarked that one of

the Petrel's eggs was very large compared with any that he had seen. In 1878 Mr. Howard Saunders remarked to me that the Fork-tailed Petrel might be found nesting on the islands of Kerry, but this is, I believe, the first record of its breeding anywhere in Ireland.—R. J. USSHER (Cappagh, Co. Waterford).

[According to the latest information (Yarrell, 'Brit. Birds,' 4th ed. iv. pp. 38, 39):—"Along the shores of Ireland the occurrence of the Forked-tailed Petrel has been so general as to render special enumeration unnecessary; *but as yet it has not been found breeding there.*" In the next edition the lines italicised will have to be deleted. There is no doubt that the egg forwarded for our inspection by Mr. Ussher is that of *Thalassidroma leachii*. We have compared it with authentic specimens of the eggs of that bird in the British Museum collection, and find it to correspond precisely with them. Hitherto this Petrel has been known to breed with certainty in only two places in the British Islands, namely, on the Stack of Dun, at St. Kilda, where the late Sir William Milner procured eggs in 1847, and on the island of North Rona, where, in June, 1883, Mr. John Swinburne found it abundant. Mr. Seebohm, in his 'British Birds,' has figured the egg of this bird taken by Mr. Dixon at Doon, St. Kilda, in June, 1884. Capt. Elwes was informed by the natives that this bird breeds on Mingalay, and Mr. Robert Gray states that there is a colony on the island of Rum, but no confirmatory evidence of this has yet been obtained. Mr. Ussher is to be congratulated on being the first to establish the fact that it breeds on the Irish coast.—ED.]

**Variation in size of the Water Rail.**—The variation in the sizes of Water Rails, referred to by Mr. Aplin (p. 338), is certainly striking. I first noticed it some years ago. I have four sterna of this bird. Two, shot respectively at Saddlescombe, Sussex, on December 21st, 1878, and at Chelmsford in 1879, measure almost exactly 1.25 in. Two others, shot respectively near Easingwold, Yorkshire, in November, 1877, and near York, in the same month, measure 1.38 in., a variation much less than that noted by Mr. Aplin, though still considerable. These measurements are from the anterior extremity of the keel to the hinder margin in a straight line. In no case was the sex noted. I have also stuffed specimens, one of which, shot here by myself on December 8th, 1879, the day after the great frost, is a monstrous one by comparison with others. I regret now that I omitted to take the dimensions while in the flesh.—R. MILLER CHRISTY (Chignal St. James, Chelmsford).

**Three Cuckoos' Eggs in a Titlark's Nest.**—A friend, who is fond of everything connected with country life, found three Cuckoos' eggs this summer in a Titlark's nest, and took all three. Is this not a very unusual circumstance? This friend lives in a very wild moorland district, just the



place for Cuckoos ; in fact, they abound there. I wonder what would have happened if the Titlark had hatched all three. I suppose there would have been a "fight for the championship," as I conclude the Titlark could not possibly have reared more than one. Every year a pair of Wagtails bring up a Cuckoo in my garden, and I notice that it is as much as they can do to manage to get food for it. I am sure they could not provide for a couple. —REGINALD KELLY (Lifton, N. Devon).

[Our correspondent does not state whether the Cuckoos' eggs in question were all of the same colour and pattern. They may have been laid by different birds ; but, having been deposited at intervals, the young Cuckoo hatched from the one first laid would doubtless have asserted its superiority. —ED.]

**Redwing nesting in Kent.**—A nest of this bird has been found at Cranbrook, Kent. Of the identity of the species I am quite sure, for the bird was killed on the nest, and proved to be a Redwing. — A. KENNARD (18, Wood Street, Cheapside).

**Lesser Terns breeding on the Keraghs, Co. Wexford.**—On the 8th June last I visited the Keragh Islands with the Rev. W. W. Flemyng and Mr. J. N. White. We found the numbers of Common and Arctic Terns breeding on the western island greatly increased since I visited it in 1883. On the north side of the eastern island we found a small colony of Lesser Terns, and took five clutches of their eggs, some uncompleted, others much incubated. They were among the sand, shingle, and seed-weed, close to high-water mark. This is the first instance in which I have met with the Lesser Tern breeding in the South of Ireland, though it breeds in the Co. Wicklow and on several other parts of the coast. Though I visited the Saltees on the above date, I have no other addition to make to my notes of the birds of that locality, which appeared in 'The Zoologist' for March last (p. 88).—R. J. USSHER (Cappagh, Co. Waterford).

**Late retention of Winter Plumage in the Guillemot.**—When steaming off Oban on the 25th June last we were interested to observe, in a small party of *Uria troile*, a single example which was still in perfect winter plumage, its white foreneck contrasting strongly with the dark livery of its companions.—H. A. MACPHERSON (3, Kensington Gardens Sq., W.).

**Barn Owl nesting in a Dovecote.**—It may interest you to know that a Barn Owl has taken up her abode in my dovecote for the last three months. The Pigeons do not mind her. She sits during the day in one of the holes, and always comes out every evening, and invariably takes the same route. I hoped she had nested, and went up to-day (June 29th) to look, but found no nest. She took no notice of me. I fear she is the last of her species in these parts, as I have not seen one for a long time. We have Brown Owls, but the Barn Owl is, I fear, become nearly extinct.

My dovecote is one of the old-fashioned buildings with an entrance at the top down into a room with holes in the walls all round. Since writing the above a month ago, I found yesterday (July 26th) a couple of young Owls in the dovecote. I am very glad of it, as it proves there is a pair of old Owls about, although I never see more than one at a time. — REGINALD KELLY (Lifton, N. Devon).

[This confirms the view long ago expressed by Charles Waterton, in his 'Essays on Natural History,' first series (p. 14). He says:—"When farmers complain that the Barn Owl destroys the eggs of their Pigeons, they lay the saddle on the wrong horse. They ought to put it on the Rat. Formerly I could get very few young Pigeons till the Rats were excluded effectually from the dovecot. Since that took place it has produced a great abundance every year, though the Barn Owls frequent it, and are encouraged all around it. The Barn Owl merely resorts to it for repose and concealment. If it were really an enemy to the dovecot we should see the Pigeons in commotion as soon as it begins its evening flight! but the Pigeons heed it not: whereas, if the Sparrowhawk or Hobby should make its appearance, the whole community would be up at once; proof sufficient that the Barn Owl is not looked upon as a bad, or even suspicious, character by the inhabitants of the dovecot."—ED.]

**Black Guillemot breeding in Co. Waterford.**—On the 2nd June last I took, for the first time, two eggs of the Black Guillemot on a rocky part of this coast. I subsequently received another clutch of two eggs of the same species, taken on May 29th on another part of the coast. Both clutches were in an early stage of incubation. A third clutch was reported to have been taken about the same time. I have heard of Black Guillemots breeding in Co. Waterford for many years, but have not had an opportunity of verifying the statement until this year. These birds are not numerous, so far as I know, on any part of the Irish coast, but I have seen them in Co. Kerry.—R. J. USSHER (Cappagh, Co. Waterford).

**Sparrowhawks' Eggs.**—This summer, near Beckenham, Kent, I found a Sparrowhawk's nest in a fir tree, containing no less than eight eggs. The nest apparently was not an appropriated one, as is often the case, but built by the hawk. It was composed of sticks and lined with a few oak leaves. The number of eggs laid is sufficiently unusual, I think, to be mentioned in 'The Zoologist.'—A. KENNARD (18, Wood Street, Cheapside).

#### REPTILES.

**Viper swallowing its Young.**—The following facts may be worth publication, as corroborating Mr. J. C. Mansel-Pleydell's notice in last month's 'Zoologist' (p. 340). A labouring man described accurately to me last month, in the New Forest, the fact of his having surprised and

killed a Viper, which "he saw swallow five or six things that looked like worms," before he was near enough to strike at it. He killed it by hitting it on the head with a stick he was carrying, and then made steady pressure on the body of the reptile with his boot, when he saw seven young Vipers wriggle out of the mother's mouth in quick succession. He described them as being "vicious little things, that all showed fight," and the size of them as being approximately "the thickness of whipcord," and several inches in length.—PERCY RENDALL (20, Ladbroke Square, W.).

## FISHES.

**Ray's Bream at Penzance.**—I have to record the capture of a fine specimen of Ray's Bream. It was taken in a pool about six feet deep artificially formed in the course of the building of a pier at Newlyn in this bay. The masons had finished the concrete wall, and were pumping out the water, when the fish was seen swimming about, and on being captured by a boat-hook run through the eye, was then brought direct to me. It is the first I have seen with all its scales on, and it is a much more silvery fish than the specimen coloured by Couch (1st ed., vol. ii., p. 129), but Day (vol. i., p. 115) mentions that its colours "appear subject to considerable variation." When first seen it was swimming with activity and speed, and as I had already received some five or six specimens (and indeed eaten one), I determined to have this one cooked. The stomach was quite empty, and the intestines very short. The flesh proved firm and white, not flaky, and of excellent flavour. This is, I believe, the first specimen observed alive and well. All the other recorded specimens, except one, have been taken on the beach in a dead or dying condition after storms. The exception is a case in which Mr. Couch, in 1828, had brought to him a specimen taken on a line (see Yarrell, 1st ed., vol. i., 120; Couch, 1st ed., vol. ii., 129), but the method of capture is mentioned with particular vagueness.—THOMAS CORNISH (Penzance).

## STELLERIDA.

**Rare Star Fish off Aberdeen.**—In 'The Zoologist' for 1882 (p. 24) I had the pleasure of recording the occurrence off Aberdeen of that rare and elegant Ophinorid *Asteronyx Lovéni*, Mull. and Fr. I have now to report the occurrence of a second example, taken in the same locality. Indeed, on this occasion two specimens were taken, but one of them having got broken into several pieces, it was cast overboard by the fishermen as worthless.—GEORGE LINN (14, King Street, Aberdeen).

## SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES,

## ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

August 4, 1886.—Prof. J. O. WESTWOOD, M.A., F.L.S., Hon. Life President, in the chair.

The following gentlemen were elected Fellows, *viz.*:—Lord Dormer, Mr. J. H. A. Jenner, Mr. James Edwards, Mr. Morris Young, Mr. F. V. Theobald, Mr. E. A. Atmore, and Mr. William Saunders, President of the Entomological Society of Ontario.

Mr. Theodore Wood exhibited and made remarks on the following Coleoptera, *viz.*:—An abnormal specimen of *Apion pallipes*, with a tooth upon the right posterior femur; a series of *Langelandia anophthalmi* from St. Peter's, Kent, taken in decaying seed potatoes; a series of *Adelops Wollastoni* (Janson), and *Anommatus 12-striatus*, also from decaying seed potatoes; and a series of *Barypeithes pellucidus* (Boh.), from the sea-shore near Margate. Mr. Wood also exhibited, on behalf of Dr. Ellis, of Liverpool, a specimen of *Apion annulipes* (Wenck).

Prof. Westwood exhibited five specimens of a species of *Culex*, supposed to be either *C. cantans* or *C. lateralis*, sent to him by Mr. Douglas, who had received them from the Kent Water Works. It was stated that they had been very numerous in July last, and that persons bitten by them had suffered from "terrible swellings." Prof. Westwood also exhibited some galls found inside an acorn at Cannes in January last.

Mr. Billups exhibited a male and female of *Cleptes nitidula* (Latr.), taken together in July last, at Benfleet, Essex, on the flowers of *Heracleum sphondylium*. He stated that it was probably the rarest of the twenty-two known species of British *Chrysididæ*, though it had been recorded from the New Forest and from Suffolk. Prof. Westwood, the Rev. W. W. Fowler, Mr. Fitch, and Mr. Champion, made some remarks on the species.

The Rev. W. W. Fowler announced that a series of specimens of *Homalium rugulipenne* (Rye) had been received from Dr. Ellis, of Liverpool, for distribution amongst members of the Society.

Mr. White exhibited a group of three specimens of *Lucanus cervus*, consisting of a female and two males. The female was pairing with one of the males, which, while so engaged, was attacked by the second male.

Mr. E. A. Fitch read a paper, communicated by Mr. G. Bowdler Buckton, "On the occurrence in Britain of some undescribed *Aphides*." The paper was illustrated by coloured drawings.

Prof. Westwood read a paper "On a tube-making homopterous insect from Ceylon."

Mr. Theodore Wood read a paper "On *Bruchus* infested Beans." A discussion ensued, in which Prof. Westwood, the Rev. W. W. Fowler, Messrs. Weir, Fitch, Trimen, and others took part. —H. Goss, *Secretary*.



## NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

*The First Report upon the Fauna of Liverpool Bay and the Neighbouring Seas.* Written by the Members of the Liverpool Marine Biology Committee, and edited by W. A. HERDMAN, D.Sc., F.L.S., Professor of Natural History in University College, Liverpool. With ten plates and two maps. London : Longmans, Green & Co. 1886.

IN the spring of 1885 Professor Herdman, of University College, Liverpool, who is so well known to Zoologists on account of his researches on the anatomy of Ascidians and on Marine Zoology generally, but more especially for his laborious 'Challenger' reports on the *Tunicata*, called together a number of local naturalists to formulate a scheme for the investigation of the fauna and flora of the neighbouring seas.

The "Liverpool Marine Biology Committee" was then constituted, and it was decided "that steps should be taken to investigate the Marine Biology of Liverpool Bay during the coming summer, with the view of compiling a 'Fauna' of the neighbourhood." Arrangements were made for "(1) organizing dredging, tow-netting, and other collecting expeditions; (2), the examination and description of the specimens obtained; and (3), the publication of the results."

A well got-up 8vo volume of 372 pp., 10 plates and 2 maps, is one result of this enterprise. This is highly creditable and encouraging, and illustrates what may be accomplished by energy and enthusiasm. The Committee was a strong one, and the Editor has been seconded by able colleagues, while the fiscal support likewise was apparently sufficient.

It would be well if local societies would take a lesson from Liverpool, and endeavour by systematic work to publish complete local faunas and floras. This has been done, and well done, for some counties and for some subjects; but Marine Zoology, as a whole, has been woefully neglected. There must be a large number of scattered workers; what is needed is that their individual efforts should be systematised, and that something definite should be aimed at. This is pre-eminently a

matter for the consideration of the secretaries of field-clubs and other natural history societies. Doubtless, as in the case of the Liverpool Committee, offers of assistance in the form of lending suitable vessels for dredging, or in other ways, would be made by outsiders.

In addition to the detailed reports of groups by various naturalists, there is a paper on "Pioneers in Local Biology," by the Rev. H. H. Higgins, M.A.; an essay by Prof. A. M. Marshall, F.R.S., "On Shallow-water Faunas"; "Notes on some of the *Polychæta*," by R. J. Harvey Gibson; "Notes on Variation in the *Tunicata*," by Prof. Herdman; "On a New Species of *Sycandra*," by R. J. Harvey Gibson, &c.

The Editor writes:—"In order to render this Fauna of Liverpool Bay as nearly complete as possible, the species recorded by the previous investigators have been discussed along with those actually collected by the Committee. Consequently, most of the reports may be regarded as including records of all the work done upon the particular groups of animals in this district, brought up to date."

The numerical results of the year's work are the addition of 235 species new to the district, making a total of 913 species. Sixteen of these species have not been previously discovered in the British seas, and at least seven species and three varieties are new to science.

The following are new:—Foraminifera: *Miliolina spiculifera*, p. 51, pl. i., fig. 3. *Reophax moniliforme*, p. 54, pl. i., fig. 2. *Placopsilina kingsleyi*, p. 54, pl. i., fig. 1. (None of these are properly described by Mr. J. D. Siddall). Porifera: *Aphroceras ramosa*, n. sp. (H. J. Carter), p. 92 (no figure). *Sycandra aspera*, n. sp. (Harvey Gibson), p. 365, pl. x., figs. 1—7. (There is a want of definite character about this species). Actiniæ: *Cylista undata*, Müll., var. *candida*, n. v. (J. W. Ellis), p. 126, pl. ii., figs. 3, 4. Polyzoa: *Eucratea chelata*, Linn., var. *gracilis*, n. v. (J. Lomas), p. 165, pl. ii., fig. 1. *Pedicellina gracilis*, Sars., var. *nodosa*, n. v. (J. Lomas), p. 190, pl. iii., fig. 2. Tunicata: *Polycyclus savignyi*, n. n. for *Botryllus polycyclus*, Sav., p. 283. *Morchellioides alderi*, n. sp., p. 291, pl. vi., figs. 1—4. *Polycarpa monensis*, n. sp., p. 305, pl. i., figs. 1—8 (all of Herdman).

Mr. Siddall alone compares his record (Foraminifera) with published lists from the other side of the Irish Sea, but

patriotism in his case has somewhat overruled judicial impartiality, as a few instances will show. *Haliphysema tumano-wiczii*, previously recorded from Dublin, in Balkwill and Wright's Report (Tr. R. Irish Ac. 1885, p. 354), and in Brady's 'Challenger' Report, ix., p. 281. *Reophax moniliforme*, n. sp., was described and figured, but not named by Balkwill and Wright, who also found *Lagena lyellii* (p. 338), and *L. lucida* (p. 340), at Dublin.

The book appears to be particularly free from misprints or oversights, but in bringing out a second volume, greater care should be taken with the plates; most of the figures are coarse and indistinct, while one or two are practically unrecognisable.

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*Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum.* Vol. XI. The Passeriformes or Perching Birds (Fam. *Cœrebidæ*, *Tanagridæ* and *Icteridæ*). By PHILIP LUTLEY SCLATER. 8vo, pp. 431. With 18 coloured plates. London: Printed by order of the Trustees. 1886.

THE large and important additions which have been made to the National Collection of Birds, by the acquisition of three valuable private collections within the past two years (*cf.* Zool. 1885, pp. 343, 355), will only be gradually appreciated by ornithologists at home and abroad, as these fresh materials for the General Catalogue now in progress come to be utilised in each succeeding volume. Some idea of the present dimensions of the general collection may be formed, when it is stated that, although the volume of the Catalogue just completed by Mr. Sclater deals with only three families of Passeriform birds restricted to the New World, the total number of species included is 575, represented in the British Museum Collection by 5494 specimens. In most cases there is a good series of each, serving admirably to show the geographical distribution of the species, and the changes of plumage which are referable to age, sex, and season.

The three families dealt with in the volume just published, are especially characteristic of the Neotropical Region, and it is fortunate that the collections of Messrs. Salvin and Godman, and of Mr. Sclater, so rich in South American species, have been acquired so opportunely as to admit of their partial incorporation in the new volume of the Catalogue.

In regard to classification, Mr. Selater considers the *Cœrebidæ* to be nearly allied to the *Tanagridæ*, and indeed it is somewhat difficult to separate them by external characters. They appear, he says, to perform the same functions in Nature in the Neotropical Region as the *Nectariniidæ* and *Dicæidæ* in the tropics of the Old World. The *Tanagridæ* also are very closely allied to the *Fringillidæ*, and are in fact fruit- and insect-eating finches. They come in very naturally, he considers, between the *Mniotiltidæ* and *Cœrebidæ* on the one side, and the *Fringillidæ* on the other. But whether the *Icteridæ* should immediately follow the *Tanagridæ* in a natural series, is perhaps open to question. They present many points of resemblance to the *Sturnidæ*, and it might be better therefore to place them after *Fringillidæ*, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the former family. Mr. Selater, however, has deemed it advisable to follow Mr. Wallace's arrangement of the Oscines, which has been adopted in this part of the Museum Catalogue.

The eighteen coloured plates (drawn by Smit and lithographed by Mintern Brothers) will show to the uninitiated what very beautifully plumaged birds are included amongst the families comprised in this volume. Of the species figured the following are unique:—*Chlorophanes purpurascens* (pl. iv.), *Chlorophonia flavirostris* (pl. vi.), *Euphonia vittata* (pl. x.), and *Arremon wuchereri* (pl. xvii), while several others, such as *Buarremon leucopis* (pl. xiv.), *B. comptus* (pl. xv.), and *Icterus hawkswelli* (pl. xviii.), have been figured from the type specimens in the British Museum Collection, the last-named having been described for the first time by Mr. Selater only last year (Proc. Zool. Soc. 1885, p. 671). Among the very few typographical errors which we have noticed in this volume, we may point out a want of correspondence in the specific name of a *Carthiola* described on p. 46, and figured on plate v., a trifling mistake which is easily corrected.

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*Catalogue of the Lizards in the British Museum.* Second Edition. By G. A. BOULENGER. Vol. II. 8vo, pp. 492, with 24 plates. Printed by order of the Trustees. 1885.

WHEN reviewing the first volume of this new edition of the Catalogue of Lizards ('Zoologist,' 1885, p. 196), we did not



expect that the second volume would be so soon forthcoming. With the enthusiasm of a specialist, however, Mr. Boulenger has worked so indefatigably at its preparation that it has been possible to issue both in the same year, and, but for the limited space at our disposal for reviews, Vol. II. would have received an earlier notice. It deals chiefly with the Lizards of the New World, and, as in the case of the American birds above noticed, its importance has been enhanced by the valuable accessions derived from the collection of Messrs. Salvin and Godman, and the United States National Museum. Some idea of the labour entailed in its preparation may be formed from the fact that it has necessitated the description with the synonymy of no less than 561 species, of which 375 are in the British Museum, represented by 2335 specimens.

So far as it is possible to represent a species without the aid of colour, the four-and-twenty plates in this volume, drawn by Mr. P. Smit, seem to be very carefully and accurately done. Some of them, as, for example, *Stenocerus torquatus* (pl. viii.) or *Biocephalus aculeatus* (pl. xi.), could perhaps hardly be improved, except by the addition of the natural colours, which in some cases are very bright and beautiful.

It is to be regretted that no method has yet been discovered of preserving or restoring the natural colours of reptiles (and, it may be added, of fishes). As soon as the stuffed specimens are thoroughly dried their beauty is as thoroughly destroyed, while those which are preserved in spirit scarcely convey any better idea of their natural appearance. It is for this reason, we presume, that no attempt has been made to give coloured representations in this volume of the species which it has been thought desirable to figure. The facilities, however, which are now afforded for the transport of living specimens, and the favourable conditions under which Reptiles and Batrachians may now be kept alive and studied in the new Reptile House at the Zoological Society's Gardens, lead us to hope that no opportunity will be lost of securing the correct delineation in colours of such obtainable species as have not been hitherto depicted. Of the numerous works which have been published relating to the Reptilia, it is remarkable how few there are which contain really accurate and recognisable figures of the species which the authors profess to describe.

*British Birds' Eggs: a Handbook of British Oology.* By A. G. BUTLER, F.L.S., F.Z.S. Parts I.—III. 8vo. London: E. W. Janson. 1886.

JUDGING by the many unsuccessful attempts which have been made to give accurately coloured representations of birds' eggs, the conclusion is forced upon us that no natural objects can be more difficult to delineate. The following English authors' names occur to us in connection with the subject: Adams, Atkinson, Bree, Hewitson, Jennings, Laishley, Meyer, Morris, Newton, and Seebohm; and yet of all these not more than three can be said to have produced coloured plates of eggs which are so accurate as to be capable of identification without recourse to the letterpress (for this after all is the test of excellence), and none of them, in our opinion, are comparable to Baedeker, whose work, '*Die Eier der Europäischen Vögel*,' published a quarter of a century ago, has in point of illustration never been excelled.

In view of the recently published work of Mr. Seebohm, which in the case of most of the larger eggs contains figures more accurately coloured than those in Hewitson's work, it was a bold step on the part of Mr. Butler to bring out another "egg-book" so soon; for, while he could hardly expect in the letterpress to add anything to the information already supplied by so experienced a collector as Mr. Seebohm, it would be extremely difficult, in the present state of lithography in England, to improve upon that author's plates. His incompetency, indeed, for such a task he has himself frankly admitted. In his Introduction (p. vii), he says:—"Nearly the whole of my collecting having been done in Kent [!], and for the most part inland, there was little opportunity either of collecting eggs of many of the larger birds, or learning anything by personal experience respecting their nidification; it therefore became necessary to draw largely upon the experience of many excellent observers whose ornithological works were at my disposal."

How far he has succeeded will be best judged by those who are familiar with the work of his immediate predecessor in the same line. We will not make minute comparisons, but candour compels us to say that so far as his work has progressed (three parts are before us as we write) hardly one of the plates can be considered satisfactory, and some of the figures are undoubted failures. We must admit, however, that the plates in Part III.

show a decided improvement upon those in the preceding Parts, the eggs of the *Corvidæ*, for example, and some of the *Fringillidæ*, being fairly good.

We imagine that Mr. Butler's prime object in producing this work is based upon a conviction that a trustworthy manual of British Oology, cheaper than the large works from which he has drawn, would find considerable favour. In this we are inclined to agree with him, and for his sake we hope there may be many who will willingly pay thirty shillings. We feel compelled, however, to say that as yet many of his figures do not compare even favourably with those in Laishley's 'British Birds' Eggs,' published, if we mistake not, at a third of the price.

Not more than a page, as a rule, is devoted to each species headed by the English and Latin names, with a reference to plates and figures. Brief notes follow on the geographical distribution, food, nest and position of nest, number of eggs and time of nidification; the remainder of the page being occupied with what may be termed "general observations." Some of these are remarkable, we are sorry to say, for their inaccuracy. To give an instance: alluding to the Wryneck, Mr. Butler says (p. 112), "Its cry is a sharp whistle, supposed to represent the word *jynx*, whence its generic name." The name of the author who hazarded such an extraordinary supposition is not given, and it is due to the great authority on derivation (who has made this subject peculiarly his own) to state that Mr. Butler's words do not accurately represent *his* views on the question (see 'The Ibis List of British Birds,' p. 80). Knowing Mr. Butler's partiality for a joke, we should be almost inclined to suspect him of playing "high jinks" with his readers. It is perhaps fortunate for them that he does not describe the *young* as well as the *egg* of each species in his book; otherwise we might expect to find him characterising the young Wryneck as "*Jynx's* baby."

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*The Book of Duck Decoys: their Construction, Management, and History.* By Sir RALPH PAYNE GALLWEY, Bart. 4to, pp. 214. With numerous coloured plates and wood engravings. London: Van Voorst. 1886.

In this handsomely got up volume a subject of much interest to naturalists and sportsmen has been, for the first time,

exhaustively treated. The personal experience gained by the author in the construction and management of a decoy of his own, as well as the inspection of others, has enabled him to give not only an accurate description of the way in which wild-fowl decoys are worked, but careful details and plans which will be very useful to any one who may care to follow out his instructions for making one.

Many persons seem to be of opinion that decoys in England are amongst things of the past, but, so far from this being the case, there are at the present time about forty still in use in different parts of the country; while as many as one hundred and forty others are known to have formerly existed. The counties in which the greatest number of decoys were to be found are, as might be expected from their proximity to the sea, Essex (29), Lincolnshire (39), and Norfolk (26). For the fourth place Somersetshire vies with Yorkshire, each having at one time possessed fourteen. In Ireland there are very few; in Scotland none.

The drainage of the fens, the reclamation and cultivation of waste lands, the formation of railways, and the great increase in the number of shooters have each and all contributed to ruin decoys. Moreover, the large numbers of wildfowl which are brought by steamer and rail from Holland and other parts of the Continent every winter render it less than ever necessary for the owners of decoys in this country to incur the expense of maintaining them. Again, in counties where game abounds, and is strictly preserved for the purpose of being killed by large shooting parties during the winter months, "decoying" is out of the question unless absolute quiet is allowed to prevail within sight and sound of the decoy pond, for otherwise no ducks will visit it, or remain to be caught.

So far as can be judged from imperfect descriptions, the form of decoy introduced into England, it is said by Sir William Wodehouse, in the reign of James I., was probably much the same as that used at the present day, allowing for such modifications and improvements as time would be likely to develop. Most writers who have referred to the subject agree in attributing the invention to the Dutch, the word "decoy" being, it is said, a corruption or abbreviation of the Dutch *eende-kooi*, i. e., duck-cage.



The early history of decoys in England is still involved in some obscurity, which even Sir Ralph Gallwey's indefatigable research has not entirely removed. There are probably many earlier notices of decoys in England than those which he has quoted, commencing with an entry in Evelyn's 'Diary,' dated March 29th, 1665, which refers to a decoy then being finished by Charles II. in St. James's Park; for, if Sir Henry Spelman was correct in stating, in 1641, that Sir William Wodehouse, in the reign of James I., was the first maker of a decoy in England, one would suppose that many allusions to, if not descriptions of, the invention would have found their way into print long before Evelyn penned the note in his 'Diary' in 1665.

We may mention one work which seems to have escaped the notice of Sir Ralph Gallwey, and which is worth quoting because it contains the positive statement that there were *many* decoys in the maritime counties of England before 1675, the date of its publication. It is entitled 'Systema Agriculturæ, being the Mystery of Husbandry discovered and layd open by J. W.' [John Worlidge.] The first edition, which appeared in 1669, does not contain the Chapter (XII.) of "Fowling and Fishing," which was added in the second edition published in 1675, and in which the following remarks occur:—

*"A short digression concerning Decoy Ponds.*—Falling into this discourse concerning Waterfowl, I cannot omit to give you some encouragement to prosecute this most ingrossing way of taking them by Decoys; that which unless seen or known may seem incredible, how a few subtil Fowl should be able to draw, decoy, or trapan such multitudes of their own kinde into a known snare, and there leave them to their unfortunate ends; such unnaturalness being not to be paralleled in any other creature whatsoever. They are a peculiar species of that kinde of Fowl, and are from the egg trained up to come to hand. The manner of doing it and the making of the Pond, and the several apartments belonging unto it requires a skilful Artist, and not book directions.

"That they are of considerable advantage, is not to be doubted, *there being many of them erected in the maritime parts of this kingdom*, the gain whereof is from the vast numbers of them taken in the winter time, which are supplied from the more northern regions, whence the frost, ice, and snow banish them into the more southern. The decoys flying abroad, light into their company, and soon become acquainted with them, and allure them being strangers; and they willing to follow them in hopes of good

quarters, are by these decoys brought into the very place, where they become a sufficient reward to the owner of the Decoy, and a great supply to the adjacent markets " (p. 243).

At page 9 of Sir Ralph Gallwey's book we find a facsimile engraving borrowed from an old edition of the 'Fables of Æsop,' by John Ogilby, printed in 1665. It represents a decoy-man in the foreground taking fowl out of a tunnel net, with a pool of water in the middle distance, the mouths of two pipes showing beyond, and ducks on the wing as well as on the water. "This," says Sir Ralph Gallwey, "is the earliest sketch of a decoy and its pipes, as now used, in existence." In this we cannot agree with him. We have not made any special search for early engravings on the subject, but we happen to have met with two which are much older than the one which he has reproduced.

One of these occurs in a collection of prints by Antonio Tempesta (obl. fol.), entitled "*Venationes Ferarum Avium Piscium Pugnæ Bestiariorum et mutue Bestiarum: Delineatæ ab Antonio Tempesta: Andreas Vaccarius formis Romæ 1605.*" Plate 2 of the "first book" represents the mouth of a decoy-pipe surrounded by trees, with fowl being driven up by two dogs, one swimming, the other on the bank, and two boats being poled along by men; a few ducks on the wing. An earlier edition of this work is dated Rome, 1602, and a later one Amsterdam, 1627; but, not having seen the former, we are unaware whether it contains the plate of the wildfowl decoy or not. The same plate, however, occurs in a collection of Tempesta's engravings with a different title, namely:—" *Aucupationis multifariæ Effigies artificiosissime depictæ et inventæ ab Antonio Tempestio Florentino. Excusum Amstelredami apud Nic. Jo. Visscher A°. 1639.*" In this collection the plate in question is the eighth of the series.

Tempesta was a pupil of Stradanus (Jan van Straet), who was born in 1536, and died in 1605, according to some authorities, or, as others say, in 1618; and it is quite possible he may have engraved some of the plates attributed to Stradanus in a work with a similar title to his own,\* published many years previously,

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\* "*Venationes Ferarum, Avium, Piscium, pugnæ bestiariorum et mutue bestiarum depictæ a Joanne Stradano. Editæ a Philippo Gallæo, carmine illustratæ a C. Kiliano Dufflæo, Antwerpiae apud Joannem Gallæum*" (obl. fol., n. d.).

but without any date on the title-page. On the other hand, after the decease of Stradanus, the publishers of the later editions may have credited the pupil with some of the master's works.

However this may be, we have seen a much earlier print of a decoy in a collection of engravings published in 1582, with the following title:—" *Venationis Piscationis et Aucupii Typi. Joes Bol depingebat; Philip. Galleus excud. 1582*" (sm. obl. fol.), engraved title, and 47 plates. Plate 27 represents the mouth of a decoy-pipe, with reed screens on both sides, sheltered by trees; in the centre of the pool a dog is swimming and driving the fowl towards the pipe; while to the right of the picture, and behind the reed screens, men are peeping through holes to watch the result. In the left foreground an empty boat is moored alongside, and on the horizon a few fowl are on the wing. The position of the dog, represented as *driving* the fowl, is the only fault in the picture. This is clearly a mistake of the artist, who, although he sketched the decoy with its reed screens correctly, evidently did not understand the *modus operandi*, and placed the dog in the open water instead of in the pipe. That this is so is clearly shown by the Latin lines (the italics are ours) which are inscribed at the foot of the print, and which tell us that the fowl were "enticed":—

" Sic per insidias sinuosa et retia mollis  
Allectatur anas, cane per dumeta natante."

Here, then, we have evidence that the present mode of constructing and working a decoy was known in Holland at least as early as 1582, or eighty-three years before the date of the engraving characterised by Sir Ralph Gallwey as the earliest of the kind in existence. This, however, adds nothing to the history of the introduction of decoys in England, concerning which any information additional to that collected by Sir Ralph Gallwey can now only be discovered by accident.

If we are obliged to express our regret that no better account of the early history of decoys in England is to be had than that which is supplied in 'The Book of Duck Decoys,' we feel bound to add our conviction that no fuller information can be found anywhere else than that which relates to the past and present situation of English decoys, and the details of their construction and management. The book, in fact, appeals not merely to

sportsmen and naturalists, but to all those who, with antiquarian tastes, like to know something of the past history of the county in which they reside, and the rural pursuits of their ancestors. The numerous plans and full-page illustrations with which it is adorned add much to its instructiveness, and betoken the great pains bestowed upon its production.

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*Our Irish Song Birds.* By Rev. CHARLES W. BENSON, M.A., LL.D., Head Master of Rathmines School, Dublin. Post 8vo, pp. 189. Dublin: Hodges & Co. 1886.

As a contribution to a larger and more important work on the avifauna of Ireland, which is still much needed, Dr. Benson's little book will serve a useful purpose. It cannot be said to be exhaustive even so far as it goes, for it is not so much a general history of Irish song-birds as a personal narrative of the writer's experience within a comparatively limited area.

Several species have been included which have no claim to be regarded as song-birds, while of others which only visit us in winter the song is never heard in Ireland.

A few undoubted songsters are admitted into the list on what appears to us to be very slender evidence. The Nightingale, for example, is one of these, and we cannot help thinking that some mistake must have been made in regard to locality in the case of the specimen preserved in the Museum at Queen's College, Cork, which is said to have been procured at the Old Head of Kinsale. As yet we are not aware that any properly authenticated specimen of this bird has been obtained in any part of Ireland.

One of the most interesting birds noticed by Dr. Benson is the Redstart, whose breeding in Ireland for the first time was made known by him only last year. The nest was found in the Deer Park at Powerscourt.

We notice here and there a want of precision in some of the author's statements, as, for example, the persistent use of the word "variety" when "species" is evidently intended. It is well to be accurate, but we are loth to find fault with a book which has been designed with so good an object, and written for the most part from personal observation in Ireland.

